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AUTHOR	Summers, Ruby
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents methods and techniques for improving the educational aspirational level of disadvantaged senior high school students. The objectives of the program are listed, followed by a list of ten activity areas within which the substance of the motivational thrusts of the project are to be implemented. The activity areas are discussed. These include general orientation activities, exploration of the worlds of beauty and work activities, motivation through models using resource people, reward activities, cleanliness and orderliness activities, counseling services, student participation and publicity, extended day activities, and motivation through films. Both specific objectives and a plan for action are given for each of the above activities. A basic organization for the program is then explained, as well as the various methods of evaluation which will be used. (KJ)

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METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING THE EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONAL LEVEL OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Presented to

Dr. Robert Callis

Research in Student Personnel Work

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Presented by

Ruby Summers

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METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING THE EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONAL LEVEL OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Ruby Summers

University of Missouri

Much has been written in regard to the problems and causes of aspiration among high school students. For this study, only a brief summary of closely related work done in an effort to establish programs for alleviation of low aspiration will be given.

RATIONALE

The individual's achievement is closely related to his motivation. Generally, the research literature indicates that this relationship is positive. That which is "motivating" directs behavior toward certain goals and the satisfaction of certain needs.

Underpriviledged children - the children of poverty and of generally restricted opportunities and supports - are particularly in need of experiences that are deliberately designed to encourage them to set their sights high.

This is true because socially disadvantaged children rearly have opportunities for success. Their attitudes toward themselves - how they see themselves as social objects - are important determiners of their aspiration levels. If the aspirations of disadvantaged children are to be raised, it is necessary that interventics be designed and strategies instituted that will help them see the relevance of achievement in school to the solution of current problems as well as to a better future life.

Although disadvantaged children are adversely effected by their home environment,(Deutsch 1964) the evidence unequivocally indicates that any child with an "intact brain" should be able to succeed in academic pursuits. Further, a great deal of the failure among disadvantaged children seems to result from experiences in the school environment.

One reason "disadvantaged" children fail to succeed in school is their lack of motivation and their inability to see that education is the tool by which they can earn a decent living and rise to a better place in society. Too often, school is another world to them; they see no relationship between education and their present way of life. It is especially important that they be shown examples of people of their own race, economic level, or

cultural background who have succeeded (N. J. Ed. Assn. 1964).

OBJECTIVES

Nothing begets success like success. The critical purpose of this proposal is to create the desire among disadvantaged children to achieve success in school as a means of promoting success in their future lives. The activities enumerated are not inclusive of all the interventions that will be undertaken. They are suggestive of the kinds of activities which this Project Director , Counselor, Staff Students, parents and community leaders will develop.

The major objectives of this Motivational Project to raise the level of aspiration level of disadvantaged children in senior high school:

1. To develop both a strong desire to learn and confidence in the potential for personal achievement in school and future life.

2. To develop self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.

3. To develop educational experiences which insure opportunities for success.

4. To develop a healthy appreciation of their heritage

5. To develop a sense of awareness of economic opportunity and provide incentives to focus upon meaningful goals.

6. To develop a finer sense of personal responsibility and an appreciation of the value of hard work.

7. To develop awareness and appreciation of aesthetic values

PROGRAM

Disadvantaged children can learn to become constructive, productive citizens through educational programs designed to meet their needs. The extrinsic motivational activities implemented in this project to attain the objectives listed above, when coupled with the intrinsic motivation inherent in effective teaching and the curriculum, will contribute meaningfully to the goal of academic excellence. The following are the ten activity areas within which the substance of the motivational thrusts of this project will be implemented.

1. Continuing General Orientation
2. Exploration of the Worlds of Beauty and work (building skills in perception and communication through learning experience in the community
3. Motivation through models
4. Rewards
5 Opportunities in the World of work
6. Cleanliness and orderliness
7. Pupil participation and publicity

8. Extended Day Activities

9. Counseling Services

10. Motivation Through Film

ACTIVITY AREAS

A. Continuing General Orientation Activities

1. Specific Objectives

a. To stress benefits of education in terms of students' understanding leading to perceptions of their school roles and of the reasons they are in school

b. To build in procedures and studies which emphasize individual worth and dignity

c. To build in procedures and studies which emphasize gourp worth and dignity

d. To provide competent counseling services to students who need it in order to secure better academic achievement

e. To involve parents in the educetional process of their children

f. To develop positive attitudes of teachers toward socially disadvantaged children

g. To provide for recurring success experiences

2. The Plan

A general school atmosphere stressing a need for better achievement and proclaiming academic achievement as necessary to vocational success will need to be created. The process for developing such an atmosphere will be somewhat like that employed by an athletic coach for a contest: bulletin boards in classrooms, halls, and other appropriate places,

posters and signs will be displayed exhorting children to apply themselves to their studies.

Also, a relevant "Theme of the month" will be regularly selected by the staff and will be depicted on posters, borders of chalk boards, etc.

Appropriate certificates will be awarded for all catagories of participation, e.g.., for the best paper in the school, grade, or class for the most greatly improved performance at each level.

Parents and students will be informed of the level of the children's academic performance as compared with national norms on an achievement test. Appropriate counseling services by the teachers, the counselor, the Project Director and theprincipal will be provided to help students improve and help parents help their children.

Reference, (books, magazines) relative to the subject matter content of the grade level, which depict positive roles of Negro-life - pictures of Negroes or appropriate facsimiles and stories about the Negro in America Life - will be purchased for room libraries. Pictures of Negroes, films, film strips and appropirate general references will be provided for the school instructional materials center (library). These latter resources will supplement the f former for instructional purposes and/or be available

for browsing or check-out from the center by individual pupils.

The educational consultant will arrange for appropriate display space in neighborhood places of business (stores, beauty shops, barber shops, and others), churches, libraries, etc. In the special places displays will be made of pupils' work, such as murals and other art projects; of pictures of students at work; and of trophies for academic and/or athletic successes, etc.

Each teacher will be supplied with a Polariod camera so that pictures of students and their successes on many occasions will be taken. These pictures will be displayed either in the school or neighborhood or in both. These are specific kinds of activities which the educational consultant, the principal, staff, and pupils might plan to exercise in a general, continuing orientation toward motivation.

The staff of the school will return to work two days earlier than usual for a pre-school opening institute. The institute will be designed to (1) acquaint the staff with the continuing or orientation program (2) stimulate their enthusiasm for the program, and (3) secure their active and "committed" participation in the program.

The continuing orientation program will consist of an ongoing in-service, intra-family-faculty effort to

increase and substantially improve their relationships with the children. The result will be manifested in such ways that the teachers will unceasingly communicate to the children that they are esteemed, that they are highly regarded and that the teachers love them. This "love" should be expressed in a variety of ways. Every effortswill be made to increase this kind of relation to everyone who enters the school doors.

The effort will be extended in such ways that it will automatically reach the community through the children. The message borne to the community will be that every teacher in the school is happy and pleased with the children from what ever background and that every teacher is proud of the children.

Lectures, demonstrations, concultants, discussions and video-tape recordings are some of thetechniques which will be employed to relay this message to the teachers. The video-tape of actual classroom teaching and appropriate critiques will be a major avenue through which imaginative ways of teaching and dignifying pupils will be effectively secured. This important and challenging aspect of the continuing orientation activities will be designed to get teachers to project changes in behavior patterns at points of contact with their disadvantaged children in such a way as to continually communicate to those children just how much teachers are concerned about

their dignity, importance, and well-being and how fully accepted the children are.

Another major element of the continuing general orientation activity efforts will be to insure that disadvantaged children within theschool have recurring and significant experiences with success. This provides remarkable constrast with their backgrounds in their homes and in their communities. In the classroom and in the school, in extracurricular activities and informal instruction, procedures will be so designated that the children from any background can have something in which they participate regularly (if not on a day-to-day basis) because they succeed in it.

B. Exploration of the Worlds of Beauty and Work - Building Skills in Perception and Communication through Learning Experiences in the Community

1. Specific Objectives

   a. To provide opportunities for children to visit various cultural, merchandising and industrial institutions in their surrounding areas

   b. To provide visits to a variety of residential neighborhoods to study landscaping, maintance and home construction

   c. To provide visits to service institutions which will allow pupols to become acquainted with firemen, social workers, employment agencies, etc.

2. The Plan

It is difficult to overestimate the value of field

trips. Much of the difficulty children have in reading is caused by lack of experiences on the basis of which interests andlanguage skills may be developed. Many Negro children and their parents, as a result of past social restraints, assume that certain jobs are for other people. Aspiration to beautiful surroundings may be engendered by viewing and discussing the arts, home and community development. When children see new and interesting things, they react almost spontaneously to what they have seen. These reactions are occasions for vocabulary growth necessary for the imporvement of reading and academic achievement.

Parental assistance in field trips will be necessary. It will be the responsibility of the Project Director to plan, in cooperation and consultation with the classroom teachers, field trips and secure adequate parental help. Many of these trips will need to stem directly from work in the classroom. Others will be indirectly related but necessary to obtain the motivation required to increase achievement.

C. Motivation Through Models

1. Specific Objectives

a. To provide for resource people from non-professional sources

b. To provide for models from professional sources

c. To raise the children's cultural sights

by exposing students to experiences which may not be provided for them elsewhere

2. The Plan

The Project Director will seek out and invite resource people to the school for large and small group participation in an effort to convince children that success is possible and that it pays. The resource models invited might include the following kinds of people:

a. Local high school Negro students who were formerly students in this school and who are experiencing outstanding success in college

b. Other high school Negro students who are achieving success

c. Successful non-professional and professional Negro people who were former residents of the area

d. Members of other discriminated -against ethnic groups who have achieved success

e. Negro male citizens who have achieved normal success as fathers and citizens

f. College students who are residents of the area, particularly but not limited to athletic and academic achievers.

g. Negro professional in business, arts, sports, education, science, and other areas

D. Rewards

1. Specific Objectives

a. To educate students regarding the varieties of future job possibilities and the relationship of education to job success

b. To involve economic facets of the community in the educational process

c. To raise the vocational aspirations of students

d. To develop favorable attitudes toward work

e. To encourage pride in achievement

2. The Plan

The Project Director, together with industry, business, and governmental agencies, will plan appropriate displays and programs (for both assemblies and classrooms) related to the work performed in their installations. Thereby, children will be informed about the kinds of work available in their communities and at other locations.

In cooperation with the non-professional staff members, the Project Director will develop a work experience program for children over twelve years of age. students will be assigned to work in the school office, cafeteria, library, and such other places in the school where they may learn favorable attitudes toward work, completion of tasks, etc. Students who exhibit positive habits and attitudes regarding work will be awarded certificates rewarding them for their successes.

F. Cleanliness and Orderliness

1. Specific Objectives

a. To develop pride in personal appearance

b. To develop pride in the neighborhood

c. To develop an appreciation for beauty in the environment

d. To provide students who are in need with proper clothing

2. The Plan

Disadvantaged neighborhoods are often characterized by deteroiration, disorder, and debasement. Space limitations within the home in which children reside often do not permit orderliness. The disarray of the environment is reflected in the children's habits and attitudes toward things in their environment.

The Project Director will initiate a "pick-up, clean-up drive. Through assemblies, posters, and staff participation programs, students will be helped to develop pride in their surroundings. They will be exhorted to keep their school buildings and grounds clean.

Through parental discussion groups with neighborhood businesses, the Project Director will help organize a neighborhood "Booster Club." Through this club, in cooperation with other civic groups and churches, drives to clean up the neighborhood will be launched. Home beautification projects will be undertaken. Included among these would be tree and shrubbery planting. Flower planting and yard maintenance will be encouraged.

A full length wall mirror will be placed beside the major exit of each classroom. Beside each mirror a bulletin board on personal grooming and hygiene will be maintained.

In cooperation with the staff of the school, resource

units of work dealing with nutrition, personal grooming and hygiene will be developed for classroom use.

Parents will be involved in the collection and prepration of clothes for distribution to needy students. It is not an uncommon occurrence for children to share shoes and other clothing with siblings. Sometimes one child must remain at home while the other wears the clothing. Often children who fail to "dress" for physical education classes refuse to do so because they lack proper undergarments. The clothes closets will assist such needy children.

G. Student Participation and Publicity

1. Specific Objectives

a. To develop confidence and feelings of self-worth

b. To appreciate the contributions to American Life made by selected Negro American citizens

c. To provide peer models for Negro students

d. To provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their competencies to the general public

e. To provide students opportunities to see themselves in favorable roles in publicity media

f. To stimulate pride in accomplishments and tasks brought to fruition

Students who exhibit positive habits and attitudes re-

garding work will be awarded certificates for their successes.

2. The Plan

When students see themselves in a favorable light, their self-esteem is enhanced. The Project Director will plan a series of weekly assemblies with students sharing in the planning and spotlighted in the presentations. Arrangements will be made topresent student-plays, choirs, dance teams, etc. in public programs outside the school buildings, in neighborhood churches, and before neighborhood civic groups.

Arrangements will be made with neighboring schools for exchanges of assembly programs, choirs, and other performances. Joint meetings of student-governments will be encouraged in order to demonstrate the similarities of problems and aspirations which children have.

The Project Director will encourage and assist teachers and students in the preparation of regular news releases on events of interest taking place in the school. Cooperation of news-media-newspapers, radio and television will be solicited to broadcast and.or print news stories about significant happenings in the schools. The local radio and/or television station will be encouraged to run a series of programs focusing on the school and depicting the children in roles which enhance their feelings of pride and worth.

Within the school, the Project Director will develop and sponsor a student-produced newspaper. The major focus of the newspaper will be directed toward the children and their successes.

H. Extended Day Activities

1. Specific Objectives

a. To provide for the worthwhile use of leisure time

b. To provide for supervised student centers

c. To provide for tutorial assistance for children in reading, arithmetic, and writing

d. To provide additional school-related activities beyond the school day

2. The Plan

The hours within the school day are too few to give each child the help he needs. Some children experience success better in less formalized settings than those of the classroom. Promoting less formal interest activities, youth groups, recreational, craft, and athletic activities on a semi-formal basis within the framework of the school will develop more favorable attitudes toward school and learning success. Success begets motivation like no other incentive. Through extended-day programs, children will have additional opportunity to develop interest and skills necessary to school success.

The Project Director will work with parents and the

and staff of youth-serving agencies such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scout, American Red Cross, Boys Club of American, and others to develop activity programs for children. Parents will be recruited to work with these programs. Complementary assistance for recuiting volunteers for tutorial and study supervision programs will be secured from nearby colleges and universities. Some participation from qualified local residents will be necessary on a small salary basis.

I. Counseling Services

1. The specific objective is to provide essential services necessary to achieve the goals set forth in the major objectives.

2. The Plan

Counseling is one of the most important element of a good program designed to enhance self-concepts, beget motivation, and improve academic achievement. Both individual counseling and group guidance will be ren - dered in this service. The counselor will also assist the Project Director in the implementation of the motiva- tional activities of this program.

J. Motivation through Films

1. The specific objective is to plan and produce a motion picture film which will stimulate disadvantaged Negro children respecting the major objective of this program.

2. The Plan

The Project Director, in consultation with the staff to improve education for Negro students, will plan the film and generally supervise its production. Steps suggested:

Step 1.

Establishment of a panel of behavioral scientists, including cultural anthropologists, psychologist , and sociologists. The panel should reflect the intercultural flavor of the motivational program. The panel will include such men as: John E. Codwell, Ford Foundation, Atlanta, Ga. Robert Callis, University of Missouri, Robert Randall, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, Texas, Norman Gysbers, University of Missouri, Lawrence Bottoms, Presbyterian Synod, Atlanta, Ga., G. Don Boney, University of Houston, Walter Daniels, Lincoln University and Joseph P. Cosand, These people will determine the target areas of greatest motivational need. The five areas taken into consideration by the staff include the following:

(a) self-esteem
(b) Negro heritage
(c) models of achievement
(d) job opportunities available
(e) sense of responsibility in a community

A series of five or six movies of about twenty minutes duration could be outlined in context by this panel.

Step No. 2. A script writer would then transfer the outline of the panel into a dramatic scenario. A professional, freelance script writer, writing for the documentary on motivation alone, as opposed to writing for a producer, could be free of the obvious burden of "writing down" to a particular producer's budgetary, profit-making and overhead cost. In addition, he would not be limited to that producer's staff.

ORGANIZATION

This program, except for thefilm production activities, will be implemented in the senior high school. It willrequire the services of additional staff personnel. Extra planning time on the part of the staff, and a completely new concept of teaching and learning. The student will be the total focal point in this program and teaching will be geared to his life needs as they relate to his basic needs.

The key person, of course, in any program in any school is the principal of that school. This program is designed to operate under his complete jurisdiction and supervision. It proposes to add a Project Director to the staff to plan, initiate, supervise, and evaluate learning activities.

Good counseling is an essential element in any good motivational program. Most schools serving disadvantaged Negro children in Texas provide little, if any, counseling services. A school counselor is the second key person who will serve the needs of these students.

EVALUATION

The major purpose of these motivational activities is to improve the self-concepts of disadvantaged Negro children. This improvement is the catalyst from which better academic achievement will result.

In order to determine the effectiveness of this program it will be necessary to evaluate the self-concept of the children and to secure an adacemic grade placement scope for them at the beginning of theprogram. At the end of each school year during the demonstration period, retesting will be done to determine the extent, if any, of the progress achieved.

The author will design an instrument for an evaluation study with such consulting services as may be required. The particular instruments needed to evaluate outcomes

will be selected by the staff. The author will be charged with the preparation of reports and logs of daily activities of this motivation program.

Other evaluation techniques related to the major objectives of the program include the following:

(1) To develop strong desire to learn and confidence in thepotential for personal achievement in school andfuture life

Children who wish to learn make regular school attendance a habit. Individual, class, and school attendance records will be observed for indications of charges in attendance patterns. Confidence and desire usually yield better achievement.

(2) To develop educational experiences which insure opportunities for success

When children succeed, their concepts of themselves are enhanced. The primary evaluation of the anticipated change in self-concepts will be determined through the testing program described above.

(3) To develop a finer sense of responsibility and an appreciation of the value of hard work

The extent to which this objective is attained will be observed in the anecodotal records each

classroom teacher keeps. Rating sheets will be devised to evaluate the students' attitudes and acceptance of responsibility for classroom tasks regularly assigned by the classroom teacher and in the in-school work experience program for the older students.

Further, the extent to which this objective is attained will be reflected in the academic achievement of the students.

The succeeding chart depicts the organization and relationship of this project staff to the schools existing structure: (see chart I)

The testing program mentioned above will measure this academic growth.

(4) To develop a sense of awareness ofopportunity and to provide incentives to focus upon meaningful goals. Children who see the relevance of education to improve living manifest this change by striving to be successful in their academic pursuits. The academic achievement testing program described above is the vehicle to be employed to evaluate the attainment of this objective.

(5) To develop self-esteem, self-respect and for respect for others

This objective is related to the concepts students have about themselves. The degree to which they

(5) To develop self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others

This objective is related to the concepts students have about themselves. The degree to which they respect others relates directly to the respect they have for themselves. The creteria for the determination of the attainment of this objective will be two-fold; first, the testing and retesting of the self-concepts; and second, observations of the extent to which fighting and other disciplinary disorders are reduced.

(6) To develop a healthy appreciation of heritage

The low level of esteem disadvantaged Negro children have of themselves is directly related to the feeling of inferiority which has been assigned to and accepted by the ethnic group. The degree to which their concepts of themselves are enhanced is directly related to what is felt about their ancestors and their historical and current roles in society. The test and retest will indicate the changes that students exhibit about their feelings and attitudes toward themselves.

(7) To develop awareness and appreciation of aesthetic values

Students will be observed to determine changes

a. in their personal appearances, with respect to cleanliness, hygiene, and grooming

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b. in the manner in which they keep their surroundings orderly and clean, and

c. in the amount and extent of vandalism which is directly attributed to them.

Finally, the major criterion for determining the success of these motivational activities is the evaluation of growth in academic achievement. All the efforts of the program are directed to this end. Thus, the extent to which academic achievement is improved will be the proff of the worth of these activities.

This is one part of a three part proposal, that will be used with culturally disadvantaged children in their last three years of senior high school. This program will be in the regular school with the regular curriculum, but with real emphasis on self-esteem and optimum development in order to raise the aspiration level of students by raising their level of performance. This program will consist of one project director, 1 counselor and ten teachers, working directly with students but with the assistance of every member of the school staff. The project director will send the results to Dr. Robert Callis each year for the three years. We will compare this group with the control group and indicate the correlation.

Summers

TESTS TO BE USED FOR PROJECT

1. Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test
2. Brown-Holtzman Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes
3. Eames: Eye Test
4. Minnesota Vocational Interest Inventory
5. Cassell, Level of Aspiration

10 Questionnaires from educators as to what do they do to raise aspiration levels

10 Questionnaires from students as to what it is that teachers do to "turn them off."

Chart 1

The succeeding chart depicts the organization and relationship of this project staff to the school's existing structure.